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# Solid Waste Tonnage Fee Fast Facts

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Solid Waste Management Program fact sheet

12/2003

After you take out the trash.....

Imagine what life might be like if no one came by to pick up your trash because there was nowhere to take it. Missourians have had solid waste management services from neighborhood haulers and state landfill inspectors for so long that many people take this for granted. Like other public services, budget cuts affecting solid waste management might mean we can no longer expect these services to continue uninterrupted. To see why, read on.

- When the Missouri Department of Natural Resources organized nearly 30 years ago, the department's Solid Waste Management Program expected to protect and enhance the health and environment for all by ensuring that trash is managed effectively, economically and efficiently.
- The Solid Waste Management Fund was established in 1990 to assure proper disposal of solid waste and increase recycling efforts in Missouri.
- Money in this fund comes from a \$2.04 per ton disposal fee paid by haulers and passed on to consumers on waste disposed of in Missouri landfills or sent out of state through permitted transfer stations.
- This fee has provided 41 percent of the funds needed to support the department's Solid Waste Management Program efforts, including management, oversight of grants and enforcement against illegal dumping.
- The remaining 59 percent of the funds came from general state tax revenue that ended in November 2002. This portion funded permitting of landfills and solid waste processing facilities, inspections of disposal facilities and recycling assistance to individuals, businesses, schools and local governments.
- This \$1.78 million per year budget cut will reduce the ability of Missouri's Solid Waste Management Program to follow state law. The state's authority to regulate solid waste would eventually be transferred to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over time, this will mean:
  - more stringent federal law would soon prohibit new landfills in one-third of Missouri potentially impacted by earthquakes, karst geology and flood-prone areas. This includes the City and County of St. Louis, St. Charles County and most of southeast and south central Missouri;
  - there would be no state approval or monitoring of new solid waste facilities;



- eventually, currently operating landfills would also close because there would be no state inspection or permitting staff left to authorize permit modifications or expansions of waste disposal facilities that reach capacity. EPA does not permit or monitor transfer stations;
  - these changes would increase public and private costs of waste disposal, which often causes statewide illegal dumping to increase;
  - as open dumping increases, the quality of Missouri's environment will suffer, and public health will be threatened.
- The Department of Natural Resources recently asked a group of local officials, waste industry consultants and others representing statewide solid waste interests to suggest solutions to the current funding shortfall and possible loss of waste management services across Missouri. The group suggested that current money now directed to targeted project grants be redirected to maintain all department solid waste activities. This would replace lost general revenue and avoid adverse effects, but not increase the existing disposal tonnage fee.

**For more information**

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